



wisconsin department of  
**children & families**

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**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC ABUSE TO RECOGNIZE CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES**

(MADISON) – Governor Walker has declared October to be Domestic Violence Awareness Month and in a ceremony at the State Capitol on Wednesday, October, 12, 2011 the Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse will honor those making a significant contribution in the fight against domestic violence.

The Governor's Council has given the annual Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Domestic Abuse Issues since 1991. During October, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Council celebrate those who work to break the cycle of violence to create a safe future for everyone in Wisconsin.

The Justice Award honors an organization or an individual for outstanding accomplishment in promoting safety, empowerment and justice for victims of domestic abuse and their children. The Courage Award honors a survivor who has worked to improve community response to domestic violence.

Sara Engle of Marshfield, Wisconsin, is this year's recipient of the Courage Award. Ms. Engle has survived a brutal domestic assault in which she was shot and left for dead. The same assault killed Ms. Engle's mother. Ms. Engle has devoted extensive time to educating high school students on the dynamics of domestic abuse, as well as speaking of her experiences to judges, district attorneys, health care workers, social workers, and others. She also helps to raise funds for the local domestic abuse program, and has testified before the Wisconsin legislature on gun control issues.

"Survivors play an especially critical role in the domestic abuse movement," said Department of Children and Families Secretary Eloise Anderson. "It is an honor to be able to recognize such a remarkable survivor for her extraordinary courage".

The Justice Award goes to the Janesville Police Department for their efforts in creating a Domestic Violence Intervention (DVI) team. The Janesville DVI team makes follow-up contact with a victim of domestic violence within 72 hours of the police report and connects the victim with community resources for safety and support. Through follow-up contacts, officers are able to compile a history on the suspect and the victim and take additional photos and statements as needed to assist the district attorney's office with prosecution. The work of the DVI team, in conjunction with additional training for all officers, has resulted in better domestic violence investigations and police reports.

"The Janesville DVI team has demonstrated that systems advocacy can be initiated by law enforcement who want to make changes within their own department," said Mariana Rodriguez of the Latina Resource Center in Milwaukee, Co-Chair of the Council. "The team has also formed valuable partnerships with local resources, and in particular, the domestic violence program at the YWCA."